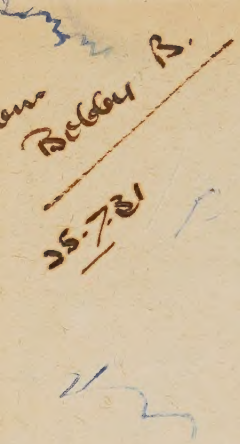
THE CALL OF THE OPEN

A LITTLE ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY & OTHER VERSE

COMPILED BY

LEONARD STOWELL


Bobby B.
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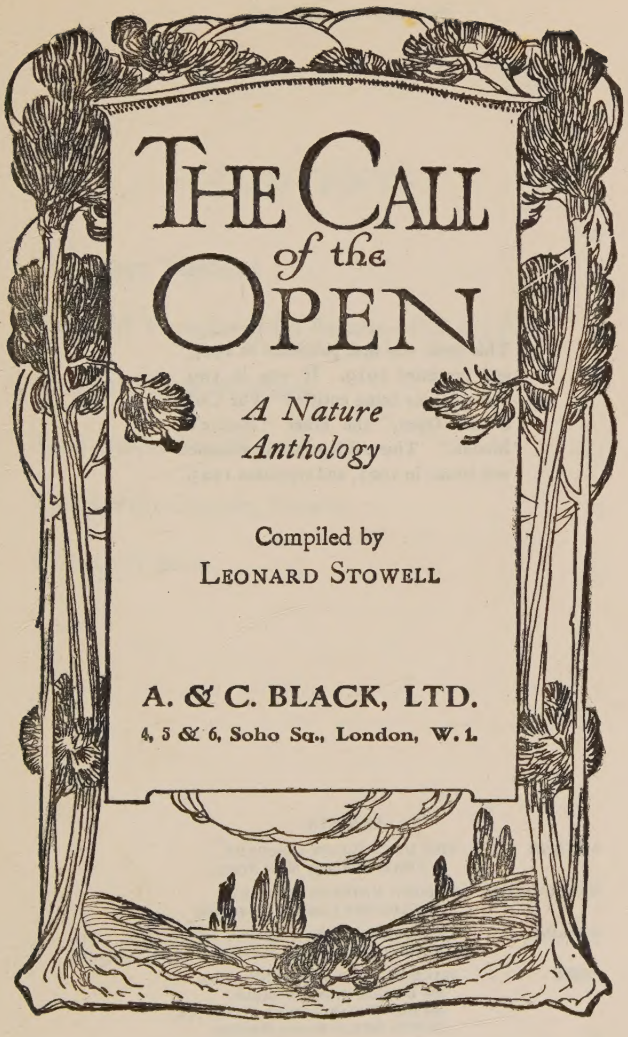
THE CALL OF THE OPEN

BUT there be others, happier few,
The vagabondish sons of God,
Who know the by-ways and the flowers,
And care not how the world may plod.

They idle down the traffic lands,
And loiter through the woods with spring;
To them the glory of the earth
Is but to hear a bluebird sing.

BLISS CARMAN



THE CALL of the OPEN

A Nature Anthology

Compiled by
LEONARD STOWELL

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PART I

THE CALL OF THE OPEN

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

IN the compilation of this little book I have been under constant obligation to authors and publishers who have allowed me to include copyright pieces. To the late Mr. Watts-Dunton, whose death is mourned by all lovers of poetry, I was indebted for permission to include extracts from Swinburne and from his own works, and for kindly assistance in making the selections. I wish also to make special acknowledgment to Mr. Jethro Bithell for allowing me to print some of his delightful translations from contemporary Continental writers—Richard Dehmel, Gustav Falke, Paul Gérardy, Charles Guérin, A.-Ferdinand Herold, Peter Hille, Victor Kinon, Agnes Miegel, André Spire, and Emile Verhaeren—taken from his three volumes entitled "Contemporary Belgian Poetry," "Contemporary French Poetry," and "Contemporary German Poetry." These are published in the excellent "Canterbury Poets" Series, to the publishers of which, the Walter Scott Publishing Company, I am also indebted for confirmation of Mr. Bithell's permission. I desire to thank Dean Beeching for a poem from "In a Garden" (John Lane); Mr. Hilaire Belloc for two verses from "The South Country"; Mr. Henry Bryan Binns for a piece from "The Wanderer" (Fifield); Mr. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt for the poem "St. Valentine's Day"; Mr. Bliss Carman, and Mr. Elkin Mathews, for three extracts (including Richard Hovey's

" The Sea Gypsy ") from " Songs from Vagabondia "; Mr. W. H. Davies and his publisher, Mr. A. C. Fifield, for two poems; Mr. John Drinkwater and his publisher, David Nutt, for three pieces from " Poems of Love and Earth "; Miss Eva Gore-Booth for her poem " The Waves of Breffny "; Mr. W. D. Howells for " In Earliest Spring"; Mr. John Masefield for " Roadways "; Mrs. Meynell for " The Joyous Wanderer "; " Moira O'Neill " for permission to use a poem from her " Songs of the Glens of Antrim "; Mr. Laurence Housman for his poem " The Wood Fairies "; Canon Rawnsley for two pieces from " Poems at Home and Abroad "; Mr. Robert Service and Mr. T. Fisher Unwin for three pieces—two from " Songs of a Sourdough," the other from " Rhymes of a Rolling Stone "; Mr. Lloyd Osbourne for Stevenson's " In the Highlands " and Messrs. Chatto and Windus for confirming the permission; Mr. Arthur Symons for " Wanderer's Song "; Mrs. Katherine Tynan Hinkson (Katherine Tynan) for two poems; and Messrs. Constable and Co. for kindly allowing me to quote two verses from Meredith's " Love in the Valley." Though the selection of pieces here printed is largely the outcome of original research, I have not hesitated, in the case of the older poems, to derive ideas from and make use of other anthologies. Amongst these I ought to mention the " Oxford Book of English Verse," and the " Pageant of English Poetry," published by the Oxford University Press, both of which have served as a source of inspiration to many other minor anthologists.

LEONARD STOWELL

The Happy Vagabond

AFOOT AND LIGHT-HEARTED

AFOOT and light-hearted, I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune—I myself am good-fortune;
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Strong and content, I travel the open road.

WALT WHITMAN

ALONE

ALONE, O beautiful white road,
Between your ditches full of grass and flowers,
Over your pebbles telling tales of old,
Alone, O forest, with the blue bark of your pines ;
And with your wind that parleys with your trees ;
And with your ants processioning that drag
Bodies of little beetles on their backs.

Alone, with you, you sun-drenched fields,
All full of cries, and noises, and heads raised alert.
Alone with you, flies, merlins, buzzards, kites,
Rocks, brambles, sources, crevices,
Fogs, clouds, mists, coves, peaks, precipices,
Heat, odour, order, chaos, and disorder,
Among the dialogues your rival mouths
Exchange for ever !
Alone with my stick, alone with my fatigue,
My dust, my throbbing temples, and my dizziness,
And the proud sweat glued to my skin.

ANDRÉ SPIRE (*trans.* JETHRO BITHELL)

THE JOYS OF THE ROAD

AND O the joy that is never won,
But follows and follows the journeying sun,

By marsh and tide, by meadow and stream,
A will-o'-the wind, a light-o'-dream,

Delusion afar, delight anear,
From morrow to morrow, from year to year.

A jack-o'-lantern, a fairy fire,
A dare, a bliss, and a desire!

The racy smell of the forest loam,
When the stealthy, sad-heart leaves go home;

(O leaves, O leaves, I am one with you,
Of the mould and the sun and the wind and the dew.)

The broad gold wake of the afternoon;
The silent fleck of the cold new moon;

The sound of the hollow sea's release
From stormy tumult to starry peace;

The Call of the Open

With only another league to wend ;
And two brown arms at the journey's end !

These are the joys of the open road—
For him who travels without a load.

Bliss Carman

VAGABOND'S JOY

THERE'S sunshine in the heart of me,
My blood sings in the breeze;
The mountains are a part of me,
I'm fellow to the trees.
My golden youth I'm squandering,
Sun-libertine am I;
A-wandering, a-wandering,
Until the day I die.

ROBERT W. SERVICE

THE JOYOUS WANDERER

I GO by road, I go by street—
Lira, la, la !
O white high roads, ye know my feet !
A loaf I carry and, all told,
Three broad bits of lucky gold—
Lira, la, la !
And oh, within my flowering heart
(Sing, dear nightingale !) is my Sweet.

A poor man met me and begged for bread—
Lira, la, la !
" Brother, take all the loaf," I said,
" I shall but go with lighter cheer "—
Lira, la, la !
And oh, within my flowering heart
(Sing, sweet nightingale !) is my Dear.

A thief I met on the lonely way—
Lira, la, la !
He took my gold ; I cried to him, " Stay !
And take my pocket and make an end."
Lira, la, la !
And oh, within my flowering heart
(Sing, soft nightingale !) is my Friend.

THE OPEN ROAD

The Happy Vagabond

Now on the plain I have met with death—
    Lira, la, la !
My bread is gone, my gold, my breath.
But oh this heart is not afraid—
    Lira, la, la !
For oh, within this lonely heart
(Sing, sad nightingale !) is my Maid.

ALICE MEYNELL (*translation from*
CATULLE MENDÈS)

WANDERER'S SONG

I HAVE had enough of women, and enough of love,
But the land waits, and the sea waits, and day and night is enough.

Give me a long white road, and the grey wide path of the sea,
And the wind's will and the bird's will, and the heart-ache still in me.

Why should I seek out sorrow, and give gold for strife?
I have loved much and wept much, but tears and love are not life;

The grass calls to my heart, and the foam to my blood cries up,
And the sun shines and the road shines, and the wine's in the cup.

I have had enough of wisdom, and enough of mirth,
For the way's one and the end's one, and it's soon to the ends of the earth;

And it's then good-night and to bed, and if heels or heart ache,
Well, it's sound sleep and long sleep, and sleep too deep to wake.

ARTHUR SYMONS

THE VAGABOND

I KNOW the pools where the grayling rise,
I know the trees where the filberts fall,
I know the woods where the red fox lies,
The twisted elms where the brown owls call.
And I've seldom a shilling to call my own,
And there's never a girl I'd marry,
I thank the Lord I'm a rolling stone
With never a care to carry.

I talk to the stars as they come and go
On every night from July to June,
I'm free of the speech of the winds that blow,
And I know what weather will sing what tune.
I sow no seed and I pay no rent,
And I thank no man for his bounties,
But I've a treasure that's never spent,
I'm lord of a dozen counties.

JOHN DRINKWATER

THE SEA GYPSY

I AM fevered with the sunset,
I am fretful with the bay,
For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her topsails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the sea.

RICHARD HOVEY

ROADWAYS

ONE road leads to London,
One road runs to Wales,
My road leads me seawards
To the white dipping sails.
One road leads to the river
As it goes singing slow;
My road leads to shipping,
Where the bronzed sailors go.

Leads me, lures me, calls me
To salt green tossing sea;
A road without earth's road-dust
Is the right road for me.
A wet road heaving, shining,
And wild with sea-gulls' cries,
A mad salt sea-wind blowing
The salt spray in my eyes.

My road calls me, lures me
West, east, south, and north;
Most roads lead me homewards,
My road leads me forth

The Happy Vagabond

To add more miles to the tally
Of grey miles left behind,
In quest of that one beauty
God put me here to find.

JOHN MASEFIELD

A BOY'S SONG

WHERE the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and o'er the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
Where the hay lies thick and greenest:
There to trace the homeward bee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hazel bank is steepest,
When the shadow falls the deepest,
When the clustering nuts fall free,
That's the way for Billy and me.

JAMES HOGG

"THE SUSSEX AIR," CROWBOROUGH HEATH (*page* 20)

A WARWICKSHIRE SONG

THERE are no oaks in all the shires
I love so well as those that spill
Smooth acorns from their mailèd cups
Along the Warwick lanes ; and still
The Avon holds as clear a way
As Tweed or Thames, and never blows
The wind along a sweeter land
Than that wheredown the Avon goes.

On northern hill and Sussex down,
In Derby dale and Lincoln fen,
I've trafficked with the winds of God
And talked and laughed with many men ;
I've seen the ploughshare break the earth
From Cumberland to woody Kent ;
I've followed Severn to the sea,
And heard the swollen tide of Trent.

I know the south, I know the north,
I've walked the counties up and down,
I've seen the ships go round the coast
From Mersey dock to London town.

The Call of the Open

I've seen the spires of east and west,
  And sung for joy of what I've seen,
But oh, my heart is ever fain
  Of ways where Avon's oaks are green.

JOHN DRINKWATER

THE LONE TRAIL

THE trails of the world be countless, and most of the trails be tried;
You tread on the heels of the many, till you come where the ways divide;
And one lies safe in the sunlight, and the other is dreary and wan,
Yet you look aslant at the Lone Trail, and the Lone Trail lures you on.
And somehow you're sick of the highway, with its noise and its easy needs,
And you seek the risk of the by-way, and you reck not where it leads.

ROBERT W. SERVICE

FROM "THE SOUTH COUNTRY"

THE great hills of the South Country
They stand along the sea :
And it's there walking in the high woods
That I could wish to be,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Walking along with me.

* * * * *

I never get between the pines,
But I smell the Sussex air,
Nor I never come on a belt of sand
But my home is there ;
And along the sky the line of the downs
So noble and so bare.

HILAIRE BELLOC

WHO WOULD NOT RIDE

WHO would not ride on the Shadowy Plain
Horsed with the Host of the galloping Rain ?
Ride, ride
Over the wide
Leagues of the forest, the corn-land, the meadows,
Blotting together the lights and the shadows ?
With the wind, the wind in his heart, in his brain,
Who would not ride ?

Into the dark that is black, that is blind,
Sped by the tempest that thunders behind—
(Hark, hark !
Loud through the dark
Roaring, he urges us into the denser
Thick of the pines where the night is intenser !)
With the Rain, the Rain on the galloping Wind
Who would not ride ?

HENRY BRYAN BINNS

THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY

THERE'S music in my heart all day,
I hear it late and early,
It comes from fields are far away,
The wind that shakes the barley.
Ochone !

Above the uplands drenched with dew,
The sky hangs soft and pearly,
An emerald world is listening to
The wind that shakes the barley.
Ochone !

Above the bluest mountain crest
The lark is singing rarely,
It rocks the singer into rest,
The wind that shakes the barley.
Ochone !

Oh, still through summers and through springs
It calls me late and early,
Come home, come home, come home, it sings,
The wind that shakes the barley.
Ochone !

KATHARINE TYNAN

FROM "THE SPELL OF THE YUKON"

THE winter! the brightness that blinds you,
The white land locked tight as a drum,
The cold fear that follows and finds you,
The silence that bludgeons you dumb.
The snows that are older than history,
The woods where the weird shadows slant;
The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,
I've bade 'em good-bye—but I can't.

There's a land where the mountains are nameless,
And the rivers all run God knows where;
There are lives that are erring and aimless,
And deaths that just hang by a hair;
There are hardships that nobody reckons;
There are valleys unpeopled and still;
There's a land—oh, it beckons and beckons,
And I want to go back—and I will.

ROBERT W. SERVICE

GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

GIVE me the splendid silent sun, with all his beams full-dazzling,
Give me the juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows ;
Give me an arbour, give me the trellis'd grape ;
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals, teaching content,
Give me nights perfectly quiet, as on high plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars ;
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers
Where I can walk undisturb'd.

* * * * *

Give me solitude—give me Nature—give me again, O Nature, your primal sanities !

WALT WHITMAN

THE WAVES OF BREFFNY

THE grand road from the mountain goes shining to the sea,
And there is traffic on it and many a horse and cart;
But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me,
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through my heart.

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the hill,
And there is glory in it, and terror on the wind;
But the haunted air of twilight is very strange and still,
And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on their way,
Shining green and silver with the hidden herring shoal;
But the little waves of Breffny have drenched my heart in spray,
And the little waves of Breffny go stumbling through my soul.

EVA GORE-BOOTH

SOMEHOW THIS WORLD IS WONDERFUL

SOMEHOW this world is wonderful at times,
As it has been from early morn in May ;
Since first I heard the cock-a-doodle-doo—
Timekeeper on green farms—at break of day.

Soon after that I heard ten thousand birds,
Which made me think an angel brought a tin
Of golden grain, and none was scattered yet—
To rouse those birds to make that merry din.

I could not sleep again for such wild cries,
And went out early into their green world ;
And then I saw what set their little tongues
To scream for joy—they saw the East in gold.

W. H. Davies

(From " Songs of Joy," by W. H. Davies, London, A. C. Fifield. *By kind permission of the publisher*)

IN THE HIGHLANDS

IN the highlands, in the country places,
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,
And the young fair maidens
Quiet eyes ;
Where essential silence chills and blesses,
And for ever in the hill-recesses
Her more lovely music
Broods and dies—

O to mount again where erst I haunted ;
Where the old red hills are bird-enchanted,
And the low green meadows
Bright with sward ;
And when even dies, the million-tinted,
And the night has come, and planets glinted,
Lo, the valley hollow
Lamp-bestarr'd !

O to dream, O to awake and wander
There, and with delight to take and render,
Through the trance of silence,
Quiet breath !

The Call of the Open

Lo ! for there, among the flowers and grasses,
Only the mightier movement sounds and passes ;
Only winds and rivers,
Life and death.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A MALVERN LYRIC

COOL where the clean winds travel
Along the solemn hills,
We watch the flowing splendour
That summer brews and spills
From Malvern down to Bredon
Across the mellow plain,
Transfiguring the lowlands
Of shining leaves and grain.

Above the black pine-shadows
We dream beneath the sky,
And watch the far-flung valleys
Of Severn and of Wye,
And see the white clouds, walking
The great blue road that spans
The world from Wales to Cotswold,
Like ghostly caravans.

From beacon on to beacon,
From shire to burning shire
The full day flames triumphant
All girt in golden fire,

The Call of the Open

And here above the meadows
  Fire-garmented and shod,
We find a little haven
  Among the winds of God.

JOHN DRINKWATER

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

UNDER the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

IN THE HIGHLANDS (*page 27*)

Songs and Thoughts of the Seasons—
Old and New

A WINTER NIGHT

THIS winter night is odorous of spring.
Dreaming, my casement open wide I fling.
Upon a veil of silk the wind seems flying.
A dog barks, and the scented pines are sighing.
The silence is an urn that every noise
Falls into. O my heart yearns for the joys
Of those who in this tender night-hour fling
Their casements open to this whiff of spring,
And gaze up to the sky, and, drinking space,
Taste all infinity while they embrace.
Their drunken souls soar to the stars in flight:
"How beautiful," they breathe, "is life to-night!"
And the wind wafts caresses o'er their hair.

CHARLES GUÉRIN
(*trans.* JETHRO BITHELL)

WELCOME, WILD NORTH-EASTER

WELCOME, wild North-Easter!
Shame it is to see
Odes to every Zephyr;
Ne'er a verse to thee.
Welcome, black North-Easter!
O'er the German foam;
O'er the Danish moorlands,
From thy frozen home.
Tired we are of summer,
Tired of gaudy glare,
Showers soft and steaming,
Hot and breathless air.
Tired of listless dreaming,
Through the lazy day:
Jovial wind of winter,
Turn us out to play!

CHARLES KINGSLEY

"DAFFODILS IN GARDENS SHINE"

A FEBRUARY SONG

NOW with tender pencilled cup,
And with triple wings of white,
Snowdrop-maidens flutter up,
Wakened from the winter's night.

Celandines are full of sun,
Daffodils in gardens shine,
And the sap begins to run
Thro' the tufted eglantine.

Now the birch with ruddier rind
Hears the tit call to his fellow;
February's gentle wind
Turns the happy larches yellow.

Alders hang their purple-flowers
Hazels golden-tasselled gleam,
And the willow feels new power
Silver-studded by the stream.

Now the lilac trees gainsay
Every hint of doubt and sorrow,
Hung with tears of rain to-day
They shall laugh in leaf to-morrow.

H. D. RAWNSLEY

FROM "SILENCE"

SINCE last the summer broke above her
A flash of lightning from his thunder-sheath,
Silence has never left her cover
In the heather on the heath.

* * * * *

Since the last loud thunder weather,
Silence has stirred not in the heather;
And the heath, wherein the evenings sink,
Beyond the endless thickets, and
The purple mounds of hidden sand,
Lengthens her haunts to heaven's brink.

EMILE VERHAEREN
(*trans.* JETHRO BITHELL)

WINTER

WHEN icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail;
When blood is nipt, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl
Tu-whit!
Tu-who! A merry note!
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all about the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl—
Then nightly sings the staring owl
Tu-whit!
Tu-who! A merry note!
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SNOW IS FALLING

SNOW is falling on the ground,
Shadows on the ground are falling

Leaves are whirled beyond recalling,
The withered leaves are dead also,
Snow and shadows fall around.

It is as though dread angels knocked
The rusty knockers of the doors fast locked,
Angels slaying us with ailings slow.

And on the verge sad clouds are trailing. . . .

All the houses are closed like sombre tombs,
Slow snow is filling all the gathered glooms.

A.-Ferdinand Herold
(*trans.* Jethro Bithell)

SPRING QUIET

GONE were but the Winter,
Come were but the Spring,
I would go to a covert
Where the birds sing;

Where in the whitethorn
Singeth a thrush,
And a robin sings
In the holly-bush.

Full of fresh scents
Are the budding boughs
Arching high over
A cool green house:

Full of sweet scents,
And whispering air
Which sayeth softly:
"We spread no snare;

"Here dwell in safety,
Here dwell alone,
With a clear stream
And a mossy stone.

The Call of the Open

"Here the sun shineth
Most shadily ·
Here is heard an echo
Of the far sea,
Though far off it be."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

IN EARLIEST SPRING

TOSSING his mane of snows in wildest eddies and tangles,
Lion-like March cometh in, hoarse, with tempestuous breath,
Through all the moaning chimneys, and 'thwart all the hollows and angles
Round the shuddering house, threating of winter and death.

But in my heart I feel the life of the wood and the meadow
Thrilling the pulses that own kindred with fibres that lift
Bud and blade to the sunward, within the inscrutable shadow,
Deep in the oak's chill core, under the gathering drift.

Nay, to earth's life in mine some prescience, or dream, or desire
(How shall I name it aright ?) comes for a moment and goes—
Rapture of life ineffable, perfect—as if in the brier,
Leafless there by my door, trembled a sense of the rose.

W. D. Howells

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

I

OH, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

II

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with honey dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

ROBERT BROWNING

SPRING

TO VIOLETS

WELCOME, maids of honour!
You do bring
In the Spring,
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many,
Fresh and fair;
Yet you are
More sweet than any.

You're the maiden posies,
And so graced
To be placed
'Fore damask roses.

Yet, though thus respected,
By-and-by,
Ye do lie,
Poor girls, neglected.

ROBERT HERRICK

WHAT IS THE WORLD TRYING TO SAY?

WHAT is the world trying to say?
Why is the light so tender and grey—
Why are the tremulous leaves asway
On the trees new fledge with the faintest green?
Nay, he were wise who could say what these things mean,
And tell the secret of May.

What is my heart trying to say?
Why does it tremble and hurry and stay
At the sight of a leaf on a sunny day,
Of a leaf tho' never so delicate-green?
Nay, he were wise who could say what these things mean,
And tell the secret of May.

H. C. Beeching

SPRING

THE soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale :
The nightingale with feathers new she sings ;
The turtle to her make hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs.
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale ;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings ;
The fishes flete with new repairèd scale.
The adder all her slough away she slings ;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale ;
The busy bee her honey now she mings ;
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY

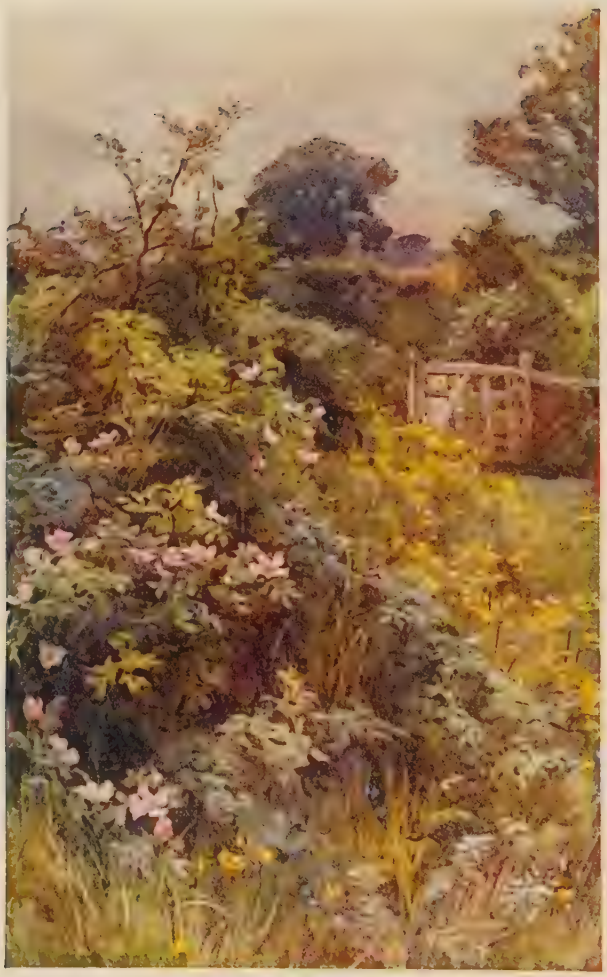
SUMMER IS ICUMEN IN

SUMMER is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu !
Groweth sed, and bloweth med,
And springth the wude nu—
Sing cuccu !

Awe bleteth after lomb,
Lhouth after calve cu ;
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth,
Murie sing cuccu !

Cuccu, cuccu, well singes thu, cuccu :
Ne swike thu naver nu ;
Sing cuccu, nu, sing cuccu,
Sing cuccu, sing cuccu, nu !

THIRTEENTH-CENTURY POEM



"SUMMER IS ICUMEN IN"

SPRING'S WELCOME

WHAT bird so sings, yet so does wail?
O 'tis the ravish'd nightingale.
Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu! she cries,
And still her woes at midnight rise.
Brave prick-song! Who is't now we hear?
None but the lark so shrill and clear;
Now at heaven's gate she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings.
Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat
Poor robin redbreast tunes his note!
Hark how the jolly cuckoos sing
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring!
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring!

EDMUND SPENSER

TO SPRING

O THOU with dewy locks, who lookest down
Through the clear windows of the morning, turn
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills tell each other, and the list'ning
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turned
Up to thy bright pavilions: issue forth,
And let thy holy feet visit our clime.

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds
Kiss thy perfumèd garments; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter thy pearls
Upon our love-sick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers; pour
Thy soft kisses on her bosom; and put
Thy golden crown upon her languished head,
Whose modest tresses were bound up for thee.

WILLIAM BLAKE

SPRING EVENING

THE bright May day is gradually ending,
Spring's dark blue clouds across the heavens steal,
While dusk upon the landscape is descending,
Where seeking violets yet the children kneel.

In all the orchards are the starlings wrangling,
Through fledgling trees rustles the playful breeze,
That like a baby's hand my hair is tangling,—
Deeply I breathe.—How green are all the leas!

Day's anxious pulse the dusk of springtide deadens,
Subdued desires are in the breast alive,—
Calling with mouth that Youth's rich heart-blood reddens:
The violets blow. O withered joy, revive!

AGNES MIEGEL
(*trans.* JETHRO BITHELL)

NOW THE LUSTY SPRING IS SEEN

NOW the lusty Spring is seen ;
Golden yellow, gaudy blue,
Daintily invite the view.
Everywhere, on every green,
Roses blushing as they blow,
And enticing men to pull !
Lilies whiter than the snow,
Woodbines, of sweet honey full :
All Love's emblems ! and all cry,
" Ladies, if not plucked, we die ! "

Yet the lusty Spring hath stayed ;
Blushing red and purest white
Daintily to Love invite
Every woman, every maid !
Cherries kissing, as they grow ;
And inviting men to taste !
Apples even ripe below,
Winding gently to the waist !
All Love's emblems, and all cry,
" Ladies, if not plucked, we die ! "

JOHN FLETCHER

SPRING

SPRING, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
Spring! the sweet Spring!

THOMAS NASHE

SONG ON MAY MORNING

NOW the bright morning-star, Day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flow'ry May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
Hail, beauteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire!
Woods and groves are of thy dressing;
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

JOHN MILTON

SPRING SONG

IT was a lover and his lass
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino !
That o'er the green cornfield did pass
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing hey ding a ding :
Sweet lovers love the Spring.

Between the acres of the rye
These pretty country folks would lie :
This carol they began that hour,
How that life was but a flower :

And therefore take the present time
With a hey and a ho and a hey nonino !
For love is crownèd with the prime
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing hey ding a ding :
Sweet lovers love the Spring.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SUMMER

WINTER is cold-hearted,
Spring is yea and nay,
Autumn is a weather-cock
Blown every way :
Summer days for me
When every leaf is on its tree ;

When Robin's not a beggar,
And Jenny Wren's a bride,
And larks hang singing, singing, singing,
Over the wheat-fields wide,
And anchored lilies ride,
And the pendulum spider
Swings from side to side,

And blue-black beetles transact business,
And gnats fly in a host,
And furry caterpillars hasten
That no time be lost,
And moths grow fat and thrive,
And ladybirds arrive.

Before green apples blush,
  Before green nuts embrown,
Why, one day in the country
  Is worth a month in town;
  Is worth a day and a year
Of the dusty, musty, lag-last fashion
  That days drone elsewhere.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

SUMMER

THEN came the jolly Summer, being dight
In a thin silken cassock coloured green,
That was unlinèd all, to be more light;
And on his head a garland well beseen
He wore, from which, as he had chafèd been,
The sweat did drop; and in his hand he bore
A bow and shafts, as he in forest green
Had hunted late the leopard or the boar,
And now would bathe his limbs with labour heated sore.

EDMUND SPENSER

A NIGHT OF JUNE

THE sun has long been set :
The stars are out by twos and threes ;
The little birds are piping yet
Among the bushes and trees ;
There's a cuckoo, and one or two thrushes ;
And a noise of wind that rushes,
With a noise of water that gushes ;
And the cuckoo's sovereign cry
Fills all the hollow of the sky.

Who would go " parading "
In London, and " masquerading,"
On such a night of June,
With that beautiful soft half-moon,
And all these innocent blisses,
On such a night as this is ?

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

FOXGLOVES AT BRANDELHOW

NOW lingers long the gold within the west,
Now twilit daisies shimmer silver-clear
Pale as the moon upon the dewy mere
Where lilies sleep ; the fern-clad mountain breast
Green to the sky, by white flocks is possess't,
And elders bloom, and roses far and near
Dance in the hedgerows ; whilst, at dawn, I hear
The thrush sing loud about her second nest.

But neither daisied fields nor milk-white sheep,
Nor rose, nor song of bird, nor elder flower,
Nor hint of heather on the mountain's brow
Can wield o'er wondering hearts such magic power
As these tall foxglove spires, whose sceptres keep
Imperial sway for June in Brandelhow.

H. D. Rawnsley

A SUMMER'S NOON

WHITE lily clouds
In violet skies ;
The Sun is at
His highest rise.

The Bee doth hum,
Every bird sings ;
The Butterflies
Full stretch their wings.

The Brook doth dance
To his own song ;
The Hawthorn now
Smells sweet and strong.

The green leaves clap
Their wings to fly;
Like Birds whose feet
Bird lime doth tie.

Sing all you Birds,
Hum all you Bees ;
Clap your green wings,
Leaves on the trees—

The Call of the Open

I'm one with all,
  This present hour:
Things-far-away
  Have lost their power

W. H. Davies

(From "Nature Poems," by W. H. Davies, London, A. C. Fifield. *By kind permission of the publisher*)

OF AUTUMN

WHEN the moon through the heavens glides,
With music enchanting our way,
Come in the gladness to stray
Of the gorgeous autumn-tides.

Now comes the wind, and lifts
The gold of glad forests along;
And many a mystical song
Along the breeze with it drifts.

This life is most gracious and dear,
Enchanting our way as we go
With the laughter and golden glow
Of autumns singing clear.

PAUL GÉRARDY
(*trans.* JETHRO BITHELL)

AUTUMN IDLENESS

THE sunlight shames November where he grieves
In dead red leaves, and will not let him shun
The day, though bough with bough be over-run,
But with a blessing every glade receives
High salutation ; while from hillock-eaves
The deer gaze calling, dappled white and dun,
As if, being foresters of old, the sun
Had marked them with the shade of forest-leaves.

Here dawn to-day unveiled her magic glass ;
Here noon now gives the thirst and takes the dew
Till eve bring rest when other good things pass.
And here the lost hours the lost hours renew
While I still lead my shadow o'er the grass,
Nor know, for longing, that which I should do.

D. G. Rossetti

"THE CARELESS GRACE OF AUTUMN"

NOW WESTLIN WINDS

NOW westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
Among the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shines bright, when I rove at night
To muse upon my charmer.

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
The soaring her'n the fountains:
Thro' lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path of man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

* * * * *

Come let us stray our gladsome way,
And view the charms of Nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And every happy creature.

ROBERT BURNS

TO AUTUMN

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness !
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run ;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers ;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook ;
Or by a cider press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

JOHN KEATS

AUTUMN

THEN came the Autumn all in yellow clad,
As though he joyed in his plenteous store,
Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad,
That he had banished hunger, which to-fore
Had by the belly oft him pinchèd sore :
Upon his head a wreath, that was enrolled
With ears of corn of every sort, he bore ;
And in his hand a sickle he did hold,
To reap the ripened fruits the which the earth had yold.

EDMUND SPENSER

Poems of Moods and Places

A TALK ON WATERLOO BRIDGE

The Last Sight of George Borrow

WE talked of "Children of the Open Air,"
Who once on hill and valley lived aloof,
Loving the sun, the wind, the sweet reproof
Of storms, and all that makes the fair earth fair,
Till, on a day, across the mystic bar
Of moonrise, came the "Children of the Roof,"
Who find no balm 'neath evening's rosiest woof,
Nor dews of peace beneath the Morning Star.
We looked o'er London, where men wither and choke,
Roofed in, poor souls, renouncing stars and skies,
And lore of woods and wild wind prophecies,
Yea, every voice that to their fathers spoke:
And sweet it seemed to die ere bricks and smoke
Leave never a meadow outside Paradise.

Theodore Watts-Dunton

IN THE WATER

THE sea is awake, and the sound of the song of the joy of her waking is rolled
From afar to the star that recedes, from anear to the wastes of the wild wide shore.
Her call is a trumpet compelling us homeward : if dawn in her east be acold,
From the sea shall we crave not her grace to rekindle the life that it kindled before,
Her breath to requicken, her bosom to rock us, her kisses to bless as of yore ?
For the wind, with his wings half open, at pause in the sky, neither fettered nor free,
Leans waveward and flutters the ripple to laughter : and fain would the twain of us be
Where lightly the wave yearns forward from under the curve of the deep dawn's dome,
And, full of the morning and fired with the pride of the glory thereof and the glee,
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches, athirst for the foam.
Life holds not an hour that is better to live in : the past is a tale that is told,
The future a sun-flecked shadow, alive and asleep, with a blessing in store.

As we give us again to the waters, the rapture of limbs
that the waters enfold
Is less than the rapture of spirit whereby, though the
burden it quits were sore,
Our souls and the bodies they wield at their will are
absorbed in the life they adore—
In the life that endures no burden, and bows not the
forehead, and bends not the knee—
In the life everlasting of earth and of heaven, in the laws
that atone and agree,
In the measureless music of things, in the fervour of forces
that rest or that roam,
That cross and return and reissue, as I after you and as
you after me
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and
beseeches, athirst for the foam.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

IN THE SALT MARSHES

MILES, and miles, and miles of desolation!
Leagues on leagues on leagues without a change!
Sign or token of some eldest nation
Here would make the strange land not so strange.
Time-forgotten, yea since time's creation,
Seem these borders where the sea-birds range.

Slowly, gladly, full of peace and wonder
Grows his heart who journeys here alone.
Earth and all its thoughts of earth sink under
Deep as deep in water sinks a stone.
Hardly knows it if the rollers thunder,
Hardly whence the lonely wind is blown.

Full the plumage of the rush-flower tosses,
Sharp and soft in many a curve and line
Gleam and glow the sea-coloured marsh-mosses,
Salt and splendid from the circling brine.
Streak on streak of glimmering seashine crosses
All the land sea-saturate as with wine.

Far, and far between, in divers orders,
Clear grey steeples cleave the low grey sky;

Fast and firm as time-unshaken warders,
  Hearts made sure by faith, by hope made high.
These alone in all the wild sea-borders
  Fear no blast of days and nights that die.

All the land is like as one man's face is,
  Pale and troubled still with change of cares.
Doubt and death pervade her clouded spaces :
  Strength and length of life and peace are theirs ;
Theirs alone amid these weary places,
  Seeing not how the wild world frets and fares.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

THE WOOD-HAUNTER'S DREAM

THE wild things loved me, but a wood-sprite said :
" Though meads are sweet when flowers at morn uncurl,
And woods are sweet with nightingale and merle,
Where are the dreams that flush'd thy childish bed ?
The Spirit of the Rainbow thou wouldst wed ! "
I rose, I found her—found a rain-drench'd girl
Whose eyes of azure and limbs like roseate pearl
Coloured the rain above her golden head.
But when I stood by that sweet vision's side
I saw no more the Rainbow's lovely stains ;
To her by whom the glowing heavens were dyed
The sun showed naught but dripping woods and plains :
" God gives the world the Rainbow, her the rains,"
The wood-sprite laugh'd, " our seeker finds a bride."

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

THE SETTING SUN

THE stainless snow and the blue,
Lit by a pure gold star,
Nearly meet ; but a bar
Of fire separates the two.

A rime-frosted, black pinewood,
Raising, as waves roll foam,
Its lances toothed like a comb,
Dams the horizon's blood.

In the tomb of blue and white
Nothing stirs save a crow,
Unfolding solemnly slow
Its silky wing black as night.

VICTOR KINON
(*trans.* JETHRO BITHELL)

THE FAIRY LOUGH

LOUGHAREEMA! Loughareema
Lies so high among the heather
A little lough, a dark lough,
The wather's black and deep.
Ould herons go a-fishin' there,
An' sea-gulls all together
Float roun' the one green island
On the fairy lough asleep

Loughareema, Loughareema;
When the sun goes down at seven,
When the hills are dark an' airy,
'Tis a curlew whistles sweet!
Then somethin' rustles all the reeds
That stand so thick an' even;
A little wave runs up the shore
An' flees, as if on foot.

Loughareema, Loughareema!
Stars come out, an' stars are hidin';
The wather whispers on the stones,
The flittherin' moths are free.

One'st before the mornin' light
The Horsemen will come ridin'
Roun' an' roun' the fairy lough,
An' no one there to see.

"Moira O'Neill"

HARVEST SONG

THERE stands a field of golden sheaves,
To the very edge of the world it heaves.
Grind, mill, grind!

The wind falls in the wide land,
Many mills at the sky-edge stand.
Grind, mill, grind!

There comes a sunset dark and red,
Many poor people are crying for bread.
Grind, mill, grind!

The night holds in its lap the storm,
To-morrow the men to work will swarm.
Grind, mill, grind!

Clean are the fields swept, never again
A man shall cry in hunger-pain.
Grind, mill, grind!

RICHARD DEHMEL
(*trans.* JETHRO BITHELL)

"THERE STANDS A FIELD OF GOLDEN SHEAVES" (*page* 80)

THE WOOD FAIRIES

IN the wood, where summer fills
Leaf by leaf its roof of green,
Where the hedgehog sleeks his quills,
Where the lurking stoat is seen,
Say—when last have fairies been ?

Up the trunk the squirrel runs,
From the oak-top chaffs the jay,
And the cuckoo sits and suns
Leisurely her time away ;
And the shrew-mice creep and play.

Fairy moss, and fairy rings
Mark, for sleep and dance, the ground ;
Surely here, where silence sings,
If we stayed without a sound,
We should see them dancing round !

Hark ! on wings that twang like wire,
Steers the darting dragon-fly ;
Here and there in banded fire,
Comes he and goes leaping by !
Through the wood he makes things die.

LAURENCE HOUSMAN

THE GREY MORNINGS

THE grey mornings I well remember,
The grey mountains new-waked from slumber.
The grey dews on the trees and hedges,
And in grey distance the grey sea's-edges.

Cool it was, sweet beyond telling,
The grey-green hay in the pastures smelling,
The grey meadows wet as a river,
The grey dew where the grass-blades quiver.

Grey gulls and the sea-grey swallow
Take the track that my heart would follow,
Home from the heat and the cruel weather,
That I and my heart might fare together!

Purple-grey are the wild hills showing,
Silver-grey is the west wind blowing.
O grey fields and grey hills behind you,
Would my feet might follow and find you!

KATHARINE TYNAN

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

TO-DAY, all day, I rode upon the down,
With hounds and horsemen, a brave company.
On this side in its glory lay the sea,
On that the Sussex weald, a sea of brown.
The wind was light, and brightly the sun shone,
And still we gallop'd on from gorse to gorse :
And once, when check'd, a thrush sang, and my horse
Pricked his quick ears as to a sound unknown.
I knew the Spring was come. I knew it even
Better than all by this, that through my chase
In bush and stone and hill and sea and heaven
I seem'd to see and follow still your face.
Your face my quarry was. For it I rode,
My horse a thing of wings, myself a god.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

SONG

PACK, clouds, away ! and welcome, day !
With night we banish sorrow.
Sweet air, blow soft ; mount, lark, aloft
To give my Love good-morrow !
Wings from the wind to please her mind,
Notes from the lark I'll borrow :
Bird, prune thy wing ! nightingale, sing !
To give my Love good-morrow !
To give my Love good-morrow
Notes from them all I'll borrow.

Wake from thy nest, robin red-breast !
Sing, birds, in every furrow !
And from each bill let music shrill
Give my fair Love good-morrow !
Blackbird and thrush in every bush,
Stare, linnet, and cock-sparrow,
You pretty elves, among yourselves
Sing my fair Love good-morrow !
To give my Love good-morrow !
Sing, birds, in every furrow !

THOMAS HEYWOOD

FROM "THE INVITATION"

AWAY, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.
I leave this notice on my door
For each accustom'd visitor :—
"I am gone into the fields
To take what this sweet hour yields.
Reflection, you may come to-morrow ;
Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.

You with the unpaid bill, Despair,—
You tiresome verse-reciter, Care,—
I will pay you in the grave,—
Death will listen to your stave.
Expectation too, be off !
To-day is for itself enough.
Hope, in pity, mock not Woe
With smiles, nor follow where I go ;

Long having lived on your sweet food,
At length I find one moment's good
After long pain : with all your love,
This you never told me of."

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

THE PLOUGH

ABOVE yon sombre swell of land
Thou see'st the dawn's grave orange hue,
With one pale streak like yellow sand,
And over that a vein of blue.

The air is cold above the woods;
All silent is the earth and sky,
Except with his own lonely moods
The blackbird holds a colloquy.

Over the broad hill creeps a beam,
Like hope that gilds a good man's brow;
And now ascends the nostril-stream
Of stalwart horses come to plough.

Ye rigid Ploughmen, bear in mind
Your labour is for future hours:
Advance—spare not—nor look behind—
Plough deep and straight with all your powers!

RICHARD HORNE

FROM "LOVE IN THE VALLEY"

HAPPY, happy time, when the white star hovers
Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew,
Near the face of dawn, that draws athwart the darkness,
Threading it with colour, like yewberries the yew.
Thicker crowd the shades as the grave East deepens
Glowing, and with crimson a long cloud swells.
Maiden still the morn is; and strange she is, and secret;
Strange her eyes; her cheeks are cold as cold sea-shells.

Sunrays, leaning on our southern hills and lighting
Wild cloud-mountains that drag the hills along,
Oft ends the day of your shifting brilliant laughter
Chill as a dull face frowning on a song.
Ay, but shows the south-west a ripple-feather'd bosom
Blown to silver while the clouds are shaken and ascend
Scaling the mid-heavens as they stream, there comes a sunset
Rich, deep like love in beauty without end.

GEORGE MEREDITH

THE HILL SUMMIT

THIS feast-day of the sun, his altar there
In the broad west has blazed for vesper-song ;
And I have loitered in the vale too long
And gaze now a belated worshipper.
Yet may I not forget that I was 'ware,
So journeying, of his face at intervals
Transfigured where the fringed horizon falls,—
A fiery bush with coruscating hair.

And now that I have climbed and won this height,
I must tread downward through the sloping shade
And travel the bewildered tracks till night.
Yet for this hour I still may here be stayed
And see the gold air and the silver fade
And the last bird fly into the last light.

D. G. Rossetti

FROM "THE INVITATION"

AWAKE! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains;
And the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves;
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green and ivy dun
Round stems that never kiss the sun;
Where the lawns and pastures be,
And the sandhills of the sea;
When the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers, and violets
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal sun.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

SONG

A SUNNY shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted :
And poised therein a bird so bold—
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted !

He sank, he rose, he twinkled, he troll'd
Within that shaft of sunny mist ;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst !

And thus he sang : " Adieu ! adieu !
Love's dreams prove seldom true.
The blossoms, they make no delay :
The sparking dew-drops will not stay.
Sweet month of May,
We must away ;
Far, far away !
To-day ! to-day !"

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

ESCAPE FROM THE CITY

TO one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

JOHN KEATS

FROM "LINES WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS"

IN this lone open glade I lie,
Screen'd by dark trees on either hand;
And at its head, to stay the eye,
Those black-topp'd, red-boled pine-trees stand.

The clouded sky is still and gray,
Through silken rifts soft peers the sun,
Light the green-foliaged chestnuts play,
The darker elms stand grave and dun.

The birds sing sweetly in these trees
Across the girdling city's hum;
How green under the boughs it is!
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

* * * * *

Here at my feet what wonders pass!
What endless active life is here!
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass!
An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear.

* * * * *

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,

The Call of the Open

That there abides a peace of thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give.
Calm, calm me more ; nor let me die
Before I have begun to live.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

AN ISLAND

MY dream is of an island-place
Which distant seas keep lonely,
A little island on whose face
The stars are watchers only.
Those bright still stars! they need not seem
Brighter or stiller in my dream.

An island full of hills and dells,
All rumpled and uneven
With green recesses, sudden swells,
And odorous valleys driven
So deep and straight that always there
The wind is cradled to soft air.

Hills running up to heaven for light
Through woods that half-way ran,
As if the wild earth mimicked right
The wilder heart of man:
Only it shall be greener far
And gladder than hearts ever are.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

THE POPPY FIELD

ONCE on a time, I know not where,
I know not when. A dream, may be.
Out of a pine wood, unaware,
I stepped upon a quiet lea.

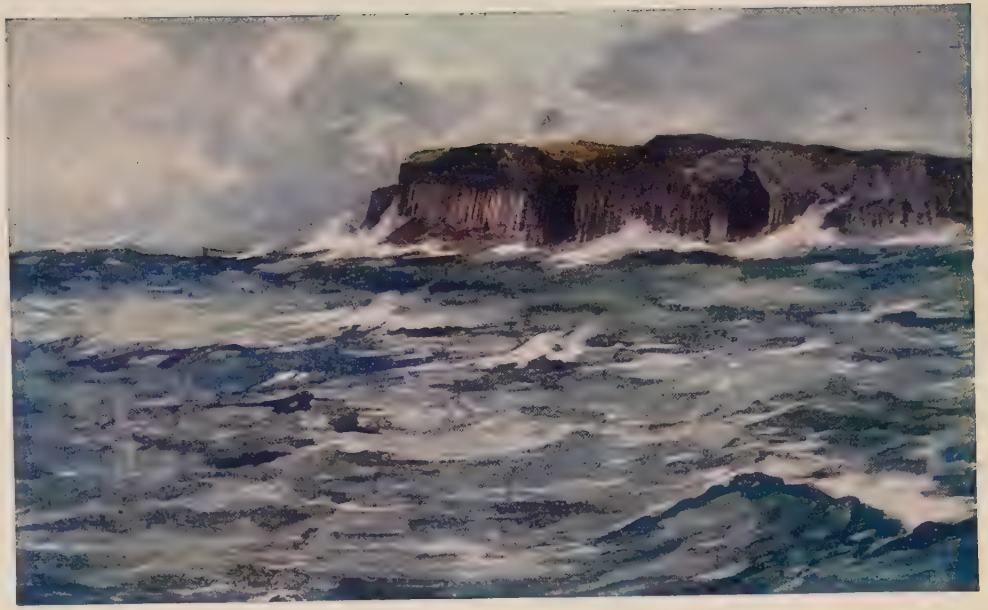
And on the quiet meadow I
Saw all around a carpet spread,
Far as the line where land meets sky,
Of motionless blown poppies red.

And on the blood-red carpet lay,
Regarded of a thousand flowers,
A lovely, tired summer day
In first sleep of the sunset hours.

No breath. No sound. A bird in flight
The air of evening scarce does cleave,
I scarcely see his stretched wings smite,
A black line in the fragrant eve.

Once on a time, I know not when.
Long, long ago. A dream, may be.
But I can see it now as then,
The silent, purple poppy-sea.

GUSTAV FALKE
(*trans.* JETHRO BITHELL)



"AN ISLAND PLACE WHICH DISTANT SEAS KEEP LONELY" (*page* 95)

SOLITUDE

O SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep,—
Nature's observatory—whence the dell,
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
'Mongst boughs pavilioned, where the deer's swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
Whose words are images of thoughts refined,
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

JOHN KEATS

DAFFODILS

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
  In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
  Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

WHEN ALL THE WORLD IS YOUNG

WHEN all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green ;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen ;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away ;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown
And all the sport is stale, lad
And all the wheels run down :
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among :
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

LAUGHING SONG

WHEN the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing "Ha, ha, he!"

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread:
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of "Ha, ha, he!"

WILLIAM BLAKE

HUNTING SONG

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay,
On the mountain dawns the day;
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk and horse, and hunting spear;
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain grey;
Springlets in the dawn are streaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming,
And foresters have busy been,
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the green-wood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot and tall of size;

We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed ;
You shall see him brought to bay,
" Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay,
Waken, lords and ladies gay ;
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee
Run a course as well as we ;
Time, stern huntsman ! who can baulk,
Stanch as hound and fleet as hawk ?
Think of this and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

Sir Walter Scott

VOICE OF THE FOREST

HOW thy green-gold eyes are sparkling,
Forest, thou mossy dreamer!
How thy thoughts are darkling,
Hermit heavy with life,
Thou with the sap of thee sighing letting the days go by!

Over the swaying of the crowns,
How it fetches breath and surges fuller, roaring enraged,
And passes—
And grows still—
Assuaged.

Over the swaying of the crowns
Stands high an earnest tone that had the ears
Already of a thousand years,
And yet a thousand years to it shall hark,
And ever this rustling strong and thundering dark.

PETER HILLE
(*trans.* JETHRO BITHELL)

FROM "A SOUTHERN NIGHT"

THE sandy spits, the shore-lock'd lakes,
Melt into open, moonlit sea;
The soft Mediterranean breaks
At my feet, free.

Dotting the fields of corn and vine,
Like ghosts the huge, gnarl'd olives stand.
Behind, that lovely mountain-line!
While, by the strand,

Cette, with its glistening houses white,
Curves with the curving beach away,
To where the lighthouse beacons bright
Far in the bay.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

SEA SONG

A WET sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast
And fills the white and rustling sail
And bends the gallant mast ;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While like the eagle free
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

O for a soft and gentle wind !
I heard a fair one cry ;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high ;
And white waves heaving high, my lads,
The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon hornèd moon,
And lightning in yon cloud ;
But hark the music, mariners !
The wind is piping loud ;

The wind is piping loud, my boys,
  The lightning flashes free—
While the hollow oak our palace is,
  Our heritage the sea.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

PART II

NATURE'S MOODS

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

MY thanks are due to authors and publishers who have consented to the use of copyright matter. To Mr. Jethro Bithell I am under special obligation for permission to reproduce here some of his translations of the work of contemporary Continental writers—Henry Bataille, O. J. Bierbaum, Carl Busse, Maximilian Dauthendey, Cäsar Flaischlen, André Fontainas, A.-Ferdinand Herold, Maurice Maeterlinck, Fernand Séverin, Emile Verhaeren, Wilhelm Weigand—from his three books, "Contemporary Belgian Poetry," "Contemporary French Poetry," and "Contemporary German Poetry," in the "Canterbury Poets" series. I wish to thank the publishers of this series, the Walter Scott Publishing Co., for confirming Mr. Bithell's permission and for allowing me to use two passages from the volume devoted to Verlaine. I also wish to thank Mr. Henry Bryan Binns for permission to include his poem "November"; Mrs. Meynell for her poem "The Rainy Summer"; Mr. Sydney Cockerell for William Morris's "Summer Dawn"; Mr. George Russell and his publishers, Messrs. Macmillan & Co., for two verses; and Mrs. K. T. Hinkson

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Amongst the books from which I have derived ideas mention must be made of the "Oxford Book of English Verse" and the "Pageant of English Poetry," both published by the Oxford University Press.

LEONARD STOWELL

From Daybreak to Nightfall

"PEAKS SO SHEER THEY SCORN THE CLOAKING SNOW"

NATURA BENIGNA
(The Promise of the Sunrise)

WHAT power is this? What witchery wins my feet
To peaks so sheer they scorn the cloaking snow,
All silent as the emerald gulfs below,
Down whose ice-walls the wings of twilight beat?
What thrill of earth and heaven—most wild, most sweet—
What answering pulse that all the senses know,
Comes leaping from the ruddy eastern glow
Where, far away, the skies and mountains meet?
Mother, 'tis I reborn: I know thee well:
That throb I know and all it prophesies,
O Mother and Queen, beneath the olden spell
Of silence, gazing from thy hills and skies!
Dumb Mother, struggling with the years to tell
The secret at thy heart through helpless eyes.

Theodore Watts-Dunton

HUES OF THE RICH UNFOLDING MORN

HUES of the rich unfolding morn,
That, ere the glorious sun be born,
By some soft touch invisible
Around his path are taught to swell;—

Thou rustling breeze so fresh and gay,
That dancest forth at opening day,
And brushing by with joyous wing,
Wakenest each little leaf to sing;—

Ye fragrant clouds of dewy steam,
By which deep grove and tangled stream
Pay, for soft rains in season given,
Their tribute to the genial heaven.

JOHN KEBLE

DAYBREAK

DAY!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay—
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

ROBERT BROWNING

CALM IS THE MORN

CALM is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main!

LORD TENNYSON

THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING

THE year's at the Spring,
And the day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearl'd;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

ROBERT BROWNING

A MAY MORNING

A LOVELY morn, so still, so very still,
It hardly seems a growing day of Spring,
Though all the odorous buds are blossoming,
And the small matin birds were glad and shrill
Some hours ago; but now the woodland rill
Murmurs along, the only vocal thing,
Save when the wee wren flits with stealthy wing,
And cons by fits and bits her evening trill.
Lovers might sit on such a morn as this
An hour together, looking at the sky,
Nor dare to break the silence with a kiss,
Long listening for the signal of a sigh;
And the sweet nun, diffused in voiceless prayer,
Feel her own soul through all the brooding air.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

THE THRUSH'S NEST

WITHIN a thick and spreading hawthorn bush,
That overhung a molehill large and round,
I heard from morn to morn a merry thrush
Sing hymns to sunrise, and I drank the sound
With joy; and often, an intruding guest,
I watched her secret toil from day to day—
How true she warped the moss, to form a nest,
And modelled it within with wood and clay;
And by-and-by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
There lay her shining eggs, as bright as flowers,
Ink-spotted over shells of greeny blue;
And there I witnessed in the sunny hours,
A brood of Nature's minstrels chirp and fly,
Glad as the sunshine and the laughing sky.

JOHN CLARE

THE DEWDROPS LIE BRIGHT

THE dewdrops lie bright 'mid the grass and yellow corn
On the fair hills of Eirè, O!
The sweet-scented apples blush redly in the morn
On the fair hills of Eirè, O!
The water-cress and sorrel fill the vales below,
The streamlets are hush'd till the evening breezes blow,
While the waves of the Suir, noble river! ever flow
Near the fair hills of Eirè, O!

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN

THE MELODIES OF MORN

BUT who the melodies of morn can tell—
The wild brook bubbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd, the sheepfold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove?

The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crowned with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous wagon rings;
Thro' rustling corn the hare astonished springs;
Slow tolls the village clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower,
And shrill lark carols from her aerial tour.

JAMES BEATTIE

ON MAY MORNING

NOW the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose.
Hail, bounteous May ! that dost inspire
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire ;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing ;
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

JOHN MILTON

DAYBREAK

A WIND came up out of the sea,
And said, " O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, " Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, " Awake ! it is the day."

It said unto the forest, " Shout !
Hang all your leafy banners out ! "

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And said, "O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, " O chanticleer,
Your clarion blow, the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,
" Bow down, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry tower,
" Awake, O bell ! proclaim the hour."

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,
And said, " Not yet ! in quiet lie."

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

DAY HAD AWAKENED

DAY had awakened all things that be,
The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,
And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
And the matin-bell and the mountain bee :
Fireflies were quenched on the dewy corn,
Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,
Like lamps which a student forgets to trim :
The beetle forgot to wind his horn,
The crickets were still in the meadow and hill :
Like a flock of rooks at a farmers' gun
Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
Fled from the brains which are their prey
From the lamp's death to the morning ray.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

SUMMER DAWN

PRAY but one prayer for me 'twixt thy closed lips,
Think but one thought of me up in the stars.
The summer night waneth; the morning light slips
Faint and grey 'twixt the leaves of the aspen, betwixt the cloud-bars,
That are patiently waiting there for the dawn:
Patient and colourless, though Heaven's gold
Waits to float through them along with the sun.
Far out in the meadows, above the young corn,
The heavy elms wait, and restless and cold
The uneasy wind rises; the roses are dun;
Through the long twilight they pray for the dawn
Round the lone house in the midst of the corn.
Speak but one word to me over the corn,
Over the tender, bow'd locks of the corn.

WILLIAM MORRIS

TO PRIMROSES FILLED WITH MORNING DEW

WHY do ye weep, sweet Babes ? can tears
Speak grief in you
Who were but born
Just as the modest morn
Teem'd her refreshing dew ?
Alas, you have not known that shower,
That mars a flower ;
Nor felt th' unkind
Breath of a blasting wind ;
Nor are ye worn with years ;
Or warped, as we
Who think it strange to see
Such pretty flowers, (like to orphans young),
To speak by tears, before ye have a tongue.

Speak, whimpering younglings, and make known
The reason why
Ye droop, and weep ;
Is it for want of sleep ?
Or childish lullaby ?
Or that ye have not seen as yet
The Violet ?

Or brought a kiss
From that sweetheart, to this ?
No, no, this sorrow shown
By your tears shed,
Would have this lecture read,
That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,
Conceived with grief are, and with tears brought forth.

ROBERT HERRICK

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

THE poetry of earth is never dead :
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead ;
That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never :
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

JOHN KEATS

"PRIMROSES FILLED WITH MORNING DEW" (*page* 126)

THE WHISPERING WAVES WERE HALF ASLEEP

THE whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the woods, and on the deep,
The smile of Heaven lay.

It seemed as if the day were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which shed to earth above the sun
A light of Paradise.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

A DAY OF SUNSHINE

O gift of God! O perfect day:
Whereon shall no man work, but play;
Whereon it is enough for me,
Not to be doing, but to be!

Through every fibre of my brain,
Through every nerve, through every vein,
I feel the electric thrill, the touch
Of life, that seems almost too much.

I hear the wind among the trees
Playing celestial symphonies;
I see the branches downward bent,
Like keys of some great instrument.

And over me unrolls on high
The splendid scenery of the sky,
Where through a sapphire sea the sun
Sails like a golden galleon,

Towards yonder cloud-land in the West,
Towards yonder Islands of the Blest,
Whose steep sierra far uplifts
Its craggy summits white with drifts.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

THE QUIET AUGUST NOON

THE quiet August noon has come;
A slumberous silence fills the sky,
The fields are still, the woods are dumb,
In glassy sleep the waters lie.

And mark yon soft white clouds that rest
Above our vale, a moving throng;
The cattle on the mountain's breast
Enjoy the grateful shadow long.

. . .

The village trees their summits rear
Still as its spire, and yonder flock
At rest in those calm fields appear
As chiselled from the lifeless rock.

One tranquil mount the scene o'erlooks—
There the hushed winds their sabbath keep,
While a near hum from bees and brooks
Comes faintly, like the breath of sleep.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

NOON DESCENDS AROUND ME NOW

NOON descends around me now:
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolvèd star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound
To the point of heaven's profound,
Fills the overflowing sky;
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath; the leaves unsodden
Where the infant Frost has trodden
With his morning-wingèd feet
Whose bright print is gleaming yet.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON

SHUT not so soon ; the dull-eyed night
Has not as yet begun
To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the Sun.

No marigolds yet closèd are ;
No shadows great appear ;
Nor doth the early shepherd's star
Shine like a spangle here.

Stay but till my Julia close
Her life-begetting eye ;
And let the whole world then dispose
Itself to live or die.

ROBERT HERRICK

CALM AFTER STORM

HOW calm, how beautiful comes on
The stilly hour, when storms are gone:
When warring winds have died away,
And clouds, beneath the glancing ray,
Melt off, and leave the land and sea
Sleeping in bright tranquillity,—
Fresh as if Day again were born,
Again upon the lap of morn!
When the light blossoms, rudely torn
And scattered at the whirlwind's will,
Hang floating in the pure air still,
Filling it all with precious balm,
In gratitude for this sweet calm;—
And every drop the thunder showers
Have left upon the grass and flowers
Sparkles, as 'twere that lightning gem
Whose liquid flame is born of them.

THOMAS MOORE

THE EVENING CLOUD

A CLOUD lay cradled near the setting sun,
A gleam of crimson tinged its braided snow:
Long had I watched the glory moving on
O'er the still radiance of the lake below.
Tranquil its spirit seem'd, and floated slow!
Even in its very motion there was rest:
While every breath of eve that chanced to blow
Wafted the traveller to the beauteous West.
Emblem, methought, of the departed soul!
To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given;
And by the breath of mercy made to roll
Right onwards to the golden gates of Heaven,
Where, to the eye of faith, it peaceful lies,
And tells to man his glorious destinies.

JOHN WILSON ("CHRISTOPHER NORTH")

A SUMMER'S EVE

LONG flowing breezes are roaming the broad valley
dimmed in the gloaming :
Thro' the black-stemmed pines only the far river shines.
Creeping through blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-
blowing bushes,
Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall.
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly ; the grasshopper
carolleth clearly ;
Deeply the turtle coos ; shrilly the owlet halloos ;
Winds creep ; dews fall chilly : in her first sleep earth
breathes stilly :
Over the pools in the burn water gnats murmur and mourn :
Sadly the far kine loweth : the glimmering water out-
floweth :
Twin peaks shadowed with pine slope to the dark hyaline.

LORD TENNYSON

DROUGHT

THE sky is greyer than doves,
Hardly a zephyr moves,
Little voices complain,
The leaves rustle before the rain.

No thrush is singing now,
All is still in the heart o' the bough
Only the trembling cry
Of young leaves murmuring thirstily.

Only the moan and stir
Of little hands in the boughs I hear,
Beckoning the rain to come
Out of the evening, out of the gloom.

The wind's wings are still,
Nothing stirs but the singing rill
And hearts that complain.
The leaves rustle before the rain.

KATHARINE TYNAN

SUNSET AT SEA

THE ruddy glowing sun
Sinks on the pale grey breast
Of the far-heaving sea ;
Rose-tinted airy shapes
Sweep after him ; while in the distant east,
With sad face deadly pale,
Breaks forth the moon ;
And far behind her—little points of light—
In misty distance shine the twinkling stars.

HEINRICH HEINE

WHEN THE BREATH OF TWILIGHT BLOWS TO FLAME THE MISTY SKIES

WHEN the breath of twilight blows to flame the misty skies,
All its vapourous sapphire, violet glow and silver gleam,
With their magic flood me through the gateway of the eyes;
I am one with the twilight's dream.

When the trees and skies and fields are one in dusky mood,
Every heart of man is rapt within the mother's breast.
Full of peace and sleep and dreams in the vasty quietude,
I am one with their hearts at rest.

A. E. (George Russell)

EVENING

THE grey vulture pinions of night
Rustle over the lake.
In claws of bronze the monster bird
Carries the corpse of the day.
Behind him a track of blood
Billows out on the west.
The swarthy eyes of the forest
Raise their needle lids,
And dumbly stare
At the troop of wrathful shadows
That follow the robber's flight.
Down from the skies
In frosty winds
Breathes a thought:
On pinions black
All life hovers
Silently
Into the valley of Death.

OTTO JULIUS BIERBAUM
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

THE CURFEW TOLLS THE KNELL OF PARTING DAY

THE Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bough,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

THOMAS GRAY

NOW CAME STILL EVENING ON

NOW came still evening on, and twilight grey
Had in her sober livery all things clad ;
Silence accompanied, for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale ;
She all night long her amorous descant sung ;
Silence was pleased : now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires : Hesperus that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon
Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

JOHN MILTON

THE RED MOON ON THE DIM HORIZON GLOWS

THE red moon on the dim horizon glows ;
And in a winking haze the prairie lies,
All in a misty dream, while the frog cries,
By the green reeds, through which a shudder goes.

The water-flowers their petals close in sleep,
The poplar-trees retreat where distance gapes,
A straight and serried line of dubious shapes,
While down the thickets the stray moonbeams creep.

The owls awake and with no sound of flight
Move in the black heav'n's sea with dense soft wings.
And, lo, the zenith fills with lightnings :
Snow-hued, Queen Venus rises, and 'tis Night !

PAUL VERLAINE
(*Translated by* ASHTON WINGATE)

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea.
Listen! the mighty being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Dear child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouch'd by solemn thought
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

NIGHT AMONG THE ENGLISH LAKES (*page* 147)

THE MILL

DEEP in the evening slowly turns the mill
Against a sky with melancholy pale ;
It turns and turns, its muddy-coloured sail
Is infinitely heavy, tired, and ill.

Its arms, complaining arms, in the dawn's pink
Rose, rose and fell ; and in this o'ercast eve,
And deadened nature's silence, still they heave
Themselves aloft, and weary still they sink.

Winter's sick day lies on the fields to sleep ;
The clouds are tired of sombre journeyings ;
And past the wood that gathered shadow flings
The ruts towards a dead horizon creep.

Around a pale pond huts of beechwood built
Despondently squat near the rusty reeds ;
A lamp of brass hung from the ceiling bleeds
Upon the wall and windows blots of guilt

And in the vast plain, with their ragged eyes
Of windows patched, the suffering hovels watch
The worn-out mill the bleak horizon notch—
The tired mill turning, turning till it dies.

EMILE VERHAEREN
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

HOW BEAUTIFUL IS NIGHT

HOW beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain,
Breaks the serene of heaven;
In full-orbed glory yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert-circle spreads,
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night!

ROBERT SOUTHEY

NIGHT AMONG THE ENGLISH LAKES

RAISED are the dripping oars—
Silent the boat : the lake,
Lovely and soft as a dream,
Swims in the sheen of the moon.
The mountains stand at its head
Clear in the pure June night,
But the valleys are flooded with haze.
Rydal and Fairfield are there ;
In the shadow Wordsworth lies dead.
So it is, so it will be for aye.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

THIS IS MINE HOUR

THIS is mine hour. Night falls upon my life.
I must forego my part in men's keen strife.
With conquered step resigned I reach the door,
Beloved too late, where none awaits me more.
An autumn shudder through the clear, cold sky
Runs, interrupting the monotonous cry
Shed by a horn astray and desolate,
Making me, languidly, smile at my fate.

FERNAND SÉVERIN
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

NIGHTFALL

FIRST, thick clouds rose from all the liquid plains:
Then mists from marshes, and grounds whose veins
Were conduit pipes to many a crystal spring:
From standing pools and fens were following
Unhealthy fogs: each river, every rill
Sent up their vapours to attend her will.
These pitchy curtains drew 'twixt Earth and Heaven,
And as Night's chariot through the air was driven,
Clamour grew dumb, unheard was shepherd's song,
And silence girt the woods; no warbling tongue
Talk'd to the echo; satyrs broke their dance,
And all the upper world lay in a trance:
Only the curlèd streams soft chidings kept;
And little gales, that from the green leaf swept
Dry summer's dust, in fearful whisp'rings stirr'd,
As loath to waken any singing bird.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN

Through the Changing Seasons

NOW THAT THE WINTER'S GONE

NOW that the winter's gone, the earth hath lost
Her snow-white robes, and now no more the frost
Candies the grass, or culls an icy cream
Upon the silver lake, or crystal stream;
But the warm sun thaws the benumb'd earth
And makes it tender; gives a second birth
To the dead swallow; wakes in hollow tree
The drowsy cuckoo, and the humble bee;
Now do a choir of chirping minstrels bring
In triumph to the world the youthful Spring.

THOMAS CAREW

SPRING

LO! where the rosy-bosom'd hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers
And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of Spring:
While, whispering pleasure as they fly,
Cool zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky
Their gather'd fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader, browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
How indigent the great!

THOMAS GRAY

MARCH

THE cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!
Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The plough-boy is whooping—anon—anon:
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

AS IT FELL UPON A DAY

AS it fell upon a day
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap and birds did sing,
Trees did grow and plants did spring;
Every thing did banish moan
Save the Nightingale alone.
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn,
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty
That to hear it was great pity.
Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry;
Tern, tern, by and by:
That to hear her so complain
Scarce I could from tears refrain;
For her griefs so lively shown
Made me think upon mine own.
—Ah, thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,
None takes pity on thy pain:
Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee,
Ruthless beasts, they will not cheer thee;

King Pandion, he is dead,
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead :
All thy fellow birds do sing
Careless of thy sorrowing :
Even so, poor bird, like thee
None alive will pity me.

RICHARD BARNEFIELD

A SPRING DAY

SWEET Day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet Rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet Spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

GEORGE HERBERT

NOW SPRING HAS CLAD THE GROVES IN GREEN

NOW spring has clad the groves in green,
And strew'd the lea wi' flowers;
The furrow'd waving corn is seen
Rejoice in fostering showers;
While ilka thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego,
O why thus all alone are mine
The weary steps of woe!

The trout within yon wimpling burn
Glides swift a silver dart,
And safe beneath the shady thorn
Defies the angler's art:
My life was ance that careless stream,
That wanton trout was I;
But love, wi' unrelenting beam,
Has scorch'd my fountains dry

The little flow'ret's peaceful lot,
In yonder cliff that grows,
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Nae ruder visit knows,

Was mine ; till love has o'er me past,
  And blighted a' my bloom,
And now beneath the withering blast
  My youth and joy consume.

The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs,
  And climbs the early sky,
Winnowing blithe her dewy wings
  In morning's rosy eye ;
As little reck I sorrow's power,
  Until the flowery snare
O' witching love, in luckless hour,
  Made me the thrall o' care.

O had my fate been Greenland snows,
  Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagu'd my foes,
  So Peggy ne'er I'd known !
The wretch whose doom is, " hope nae mair,"
  What tongue his woes can tell !
Within whose bosom, save despair,
  Nae kinder spirits dwell.

ROBERT BURNS

"NOW SPRING HAS CLAD THE GROVES IN GREEN" (*page* 159)

GLOOMY WINTER'S NOW AWA'

GLOOMY winter's now awa'
Saft the westling breezes blaw,
'Mang the birks of Stanley-shaw,
The mavis sings fu' cheery, O!
Sweet the crawflower's early bell
Decks Gleniffer's dewy dell,
Blooming like thy bonny sel',
My young, my artless dearie, O!

Come my lassie, let us stray
O'er Glenkilloch's sunny brae,
Blithely spend the gowden day,
'Midst joys that never weary, O!
Towering o'er the Newton woods,
Laverocks fan the snaw-white clouds,
Siller saughs, wi' downy buds,
Adorn the banks sae briery, O!

Round the sylvan fairy nooks,
Feath'ry breckans fringe the rocks,
'Neath the brae the burnie jouks,
And ilka thing is cheery, O!

Nature's Moods

Trees may bud, and birds may sing,
Flowers may bloom, and verdure spring,
Joy to me they canna bring,
    Unless wi' thee, my dearie, O!

ROBERT TANNAHILL

A SONG OF SPRING

WHEN daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo—O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,
When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he,
Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo—O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

NOW FADES THE LAST LONG STREAK OF SNOW

NOW fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea.

LORD TENNYSON

SWEET SPRING

SWEET Spring, thou com'st with all thy goodly train,
Thy head with flames, thy mantle bright with flowers,
The zephyrs curl the green locks of the plain,
The clouds for joy in pearls weep down their showers.
Sweet Spring, thou com'st—but, ah! my pleasant hours,
And happy days, with thee come not again;
The sad memorials only of my pain
Do with thee come, which turn my sweets to sours.
Thou art the same which still thou wert before,
Delicious, lusty, amiable, fair;
But she whose breath embalm'd thy wholesome air
Is gone; nor gold, nor gems can her restore.
Neglected virtue, seasons go and come,
When thine forgot lie closèd in a tomb!

WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN

EASTER

ALL-BEARING Earth, like a new-married queen,
Her beauties heightens in a gown of green ;
Perfumes the air ; her meads are wrought with flowers ;
In colours various, figures, smelling, powers ;
Trees wanton in the groves with leafy locks ;
Here hills enamell'd stand ; the vales, the rocks,
Ring peals of joy ; here floods and prattling brooks
(Stars' liquid mirrors), with serpènting crooks,
And whispering murmurs, sound unto the main,—
" The golden age returnèd is again ! "
The honey people leave their golden bowers,
And innocently prey on budding flowers ;
In gloomy shades, perch'd on the tender sprays,
The painted singers fill the air with lays.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN

TO AN EARLY PRIMROSE

MILD offspring of a dark and sullen sire!
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
Was nursed in whirling storms,
And cradled in the winds.

Thee, when young Spring first question'd Winter's sway,
And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,
Thee on his bank he threw
To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,
Serene, thou openest to the nipping gale,
Unnoticed and alone,
Thy tender elegance.

So virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity; in some lone walk
Of life she rears her head,
Obscure and unobserved;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
And hardens her to bear
Serene the ills of life.

HENRY KIRKE WHITE

THE LINNET

TUCK, tuck, feer—from the green and growing leaves ;
Ic, ic, ic—from the little song-bird's throat ;
How the silver chorus weaves in the sun and 'neath the eaves,
While from dewy clover fields comes the lowing of the beeves,
And the summer in the heavens is afloat !

Wye, wye, chir—'tis the little linnet sings ;
Weet, weet, weet—how his pipy treble trills !
In his bill and on his wings what a joy the linnet brings,
As over all the sunny earth his merry lay he flings,
Giving gladness to the music of the rills !

Ic, ic, ir—from a happy heart unbound ;
Lug, lug, jee—from the dawn till close of day !
There is rapture in the sound as it fills the sunshine round,
Till the ploughman's careless whistles and the shepherd's pipe are drown'd,
And the mower sings unheeded 'mong the hay !

Jug, jug, joey—oh, how sweet the linnet's theme!
Pen, pen, poy—is he wooing all the while?
Does he dream he is in heaven, and is telling now his dream,
To soothe the heart of pretty girl basking by the stream,
Or waiting for her lover at the stile?

Pipe, pipe, chow—will the linnet never weary?
Bel, bel, tyr—is he pouring forth his vows?
The maiden lone and dreary may feel her heart grow cheery,
Yet none may know the linnet's bliss except his own sweet dearie,
With her little household nestled 'mong the boughs!

James Hedderwick

A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK

A ROSE-BUD by my early walk,
Adown a corn-enclosing bawk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.

Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread,
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.

Within the bush, her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chilly on her breast
Sae early in the morning.

She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedew'd
Awake the early morning.

So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair,
On trembling string or vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tents thy early morning.

So thou, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,
Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watch'd thy early morning.

ROBERT BURNS

SUMMER

THEN came the jolly summer, being dight
In a thin silken cassock coloured green,
That was unlinèd all, to be more light:
And on his head a garland well beseen
He wore, from which, as he had chafèd been
The sweat did drop; and in his hand he bore
A bow and shafts, as he in forest green
Had hunted late the leopard or the boar,
And now would bathe his limbs with labour heated sore.

EDMUND SPENSER

THE BEANFIELD

A BEANFIELD in blossom smells as sweet
As Araby, or groves of orange flowers ;
Black-eyed and white, and feathered to one's feet,
How sweet they smell in morning's dewy hours.
When seething night is left upon the flowers,
Another morn's sun shines brightly o'er the field,
The bean bloom glitters in the gems of showers,
And sweet the fragrance which the union yields
To battered footpaths crossing o'er the fields.

JOHN CLARE

SUMMER

THE months we used to read of
Have come to us again,
With sunniness and sunniness,
And rare delights of rain :
The lark is up, and says aloud,
East and west I see no cloud.

The lanes are full of roses,
The fields are grassy deep ;
The leafiness and floweriness
Make one abundant heap ;
The balmy, blossom-breathing airs
Smell of future plums and pears.

The sunshine at our waking
Is still found smiling by ;
With beamingness and earnestness,
Like some belovèd eye ;
And all the day it seems to take
Delight in being wide awake.

Through the Changing Seasons

The lassies in the gardens
  Show forth their heads of hair;
With rosiness and lightsomeness,
  A chasing here and there;
And then they'll hear the birds, and stand,
And shade their eyes with lifted hand.

And then again they're off there,
  As if their lovers came;
With giddiness and gladsomeness,
  Like doves but newly tame.
Ah! light your cheeks at Nature, do,
And draw the whole world after you.

LEIGH HUNT

THE RAINY SUMMER

THERE'S much afoot in heaven and earth this year;
The winds hunt up the sun, hunt up the moon,
Trouble the dubious dawn, hasten the drear
Height of a threatening noon.

No breath of boughs, no breath of leaves, of fronds
May linger or grow warm; the trees are loud;
The forest, rooted, tosses in her bonds,
And strains against the cloud.

No scents may pause within the garden-fold;
The rifled flowers are cold as ocean-shells;
Bees, humming in the storm, carry their cold
Wild honey to cold cells.

ALICE MEYNELL

AUTUMN

NEVERMORE

MEMORY, why bring me thither? Now the fear
Of Autumn drives the thrush through the wan sky,
The sun shines with a sad monotony
On yellowing woods where the north wind blows drear,
While we two walk with but each other near,
And thoughts with locks seem to be blown by.
Sudden she bends on mine a kindling eye;
Her voice of living gold so rich and clear,
Fresh as an angel's, asks, "Which was most sweet
Of all your days?" For words, I smile discreet,
Kiss her white hand to show that it is dear.
Ah! how the earliest flowers give sweetest scent,
Ah! how deliciously it haunts the ear,
The first "Yes" that from well loved lips there went

PAUL VERLAINE
(*Translated by* ASHTON WINGATE)

SONNET

THAT time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang:
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest:
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by:
—This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong;
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ON SHORT AND SHORTER DAYS

ON short and shorter days the rain-clouds sink a heavier burden, and the sun but shows to blink.
Yesterday I saw a bunch of roses at the forest's hem. . . .
Give me thy hand, and come . . . and we will gather them. . . .
They will be the last, I think!

CÄSAR FLAISCHLEN
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

OUR EYES SO EMPTY

OUR eyes so empty,
Our kisses so withered,
We weep and are silent,
Our hearts beat no more.

The swallows are gathering out by the sea,
The swallows leave us,
They will come again,
But never more to us twain.

MAXIMILIAN DAUTHENDEY
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

THE MONTH OF DAMP

I HAVE been watching through grey window panes
This evening falling. . . . Someone is astray
Along the ditches filled with autumn rains. . . .
O wearied wanderer upon thy way
At the dark hour when shepherds leave the hill,
Hasten ! The doors are closed, no fires burn
In lands where thou returnest sick and chill.
Empty the high road is, and the lucerne
Sounds far away faint with discouragement. . . .
O hasten : the old lumbering carts have blown
Their lanterns out. . . . It is the Autumn, bent
And gone to sleep over the cold hearth-stone. . . .
Autumn is singing in the dead vine-shoots. . . .
It is the hour when corpses on the flood,
Dreamily floating, feel in their white blood
The first cold risen from the river's roots,
And go down to the deep and sheltering mud.

HENRY BATAILLE
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

LATE LEAVES

THE leaves are falling; so am I;
The few late flowers have moisture in the eye;
So have I too.
Scarcely on any bough is heard
Joyous, or even unjoyous, bird
The whole wood through.

Winter may come: he brings but nigher
His circle (yearly narrowing) to the fire
Where old friends meet.
Let him; now heaven is overcast,
And spring and summer both are past,
And all things sweet.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

WINDS TORMENT THE TREES

WINDS torment the trees,
The leaves yellow, shrivel, freeze.

Men, still brown their summer cheek,
And yet their lips the last word speak,
The song is near its lees.

MAXIMILIAN DAUTHENDEY
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

AUTUMN

MILD is the parting year, and sweet
The odour of the falling spray;
Life passes on more rudely fleet
And balmless is its closing day.

I wait its close, I court its gloom,
But mourn that never must there fall
Or on my breast or on my tomb
The tear that would have soothed it all.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

AUTUMN

DEAR, do you see the autumn fruits a-lying ?
Listen, what slow, monotonous flute is sighing
A song of parting through the shivering wold ?
O the song of the flute is pale, the tune so old
Its passing seems to wither all the leaves.
The sky has lost now its diaphanous eves
Which charmed your eyes not very long ago.
No gladioli now nor lilies blow,
And see the rose-leaves on the garden grass,
The last flower that the autumn slays, alas !
Dear, can you hear the falling of the fruit ?
Into the night sounds, weeps the woodland flute,
Into the night that veils our happy path,
Into the night that all things shadowed hath.

A.-Ferdinand Herold
(*Translated by* Jethro Bithell)

NOW AUTUMN COMES

NOW autumn comes, the air grows strangely pale,
To fall the reddened apple needs no gale,
The storks have long since left the yellowing land,
The night grows cold, and All-Saints is at hand.
The leaves will soon be shed, now heart finds heart.
—Dear, is it time for you and me to part ?

CARL BUSSE
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

A WINTER STORM

THEN comes the father of the tempest forth,
Wrapt in black glooms. First joyless rains obscure
Drive through the mingling skies with vapour foul;
Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
That grumbling wave below. The unsightly plain
Lies a brown deluge, as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
Combine, and deepening into night, shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of Heaven,
Each to his home, retire; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled air,
Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.

* * * *

Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent swell'd,
And the mix'd ruin of its banks o'erspread,
At last the roused-up river pours along:
Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain, and the mossy wild,
Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sounding far;
Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads,
Calm, sluggish, silent; till again, constrain'd

Between two meeting hills, it bursts away,
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid stream;
There, gathering triple force, rapid and deep,
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through.

JAMES THOMSON

NOVEMBER

YET one smile more, departing, distant sun!
One mellow smile through the soft vapoury air,
Ere, o'er the frozen earth, the loud winds run,
Or snows are sifted o'er the meadows bare.
One smile on the brown hills and naked trees,
And the dark rocks whose summer wreaths are cast,
And the blue gentian-flower, that, in the breeze,
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last.
Yet a few sunny days, in which the bee
Shall murmur by the hedge that skirts the way,
The cricket chirp upon the russet-lea,
And man delight to linger in the ray.
Yet one rich smile, and we will try to bear
The piercing winter frost, and winds, and darkened air.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

THE COLD EARTH SLEPT BELOW

THE cold earth slept below,
Above the cold sky shone;
And all around, with a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow,
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

The wintry hedge was black,
The green grass was not seen,
The birds did rest on the bare thorn's breast,
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack
Which the frost had made between.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

NOVEMBER

FAR inland, and a sky
Like a sea-rippled strand,
With cold pale pools left by the far-spent tide—
A limpid east-wind blowing.

Marching against the sky, horses and men,
A team goes, sowing in the corn
Into the gleaming many-furrowed field,
The harrows dragging after.

And the Earth gladdens quietly in the clean gold light
As one that bathes at a salt pool on the strand
And hears the sea afar—the old, wild sea—
The haunting of the sea along the margin.

HENRY BRYAN BINNS

WINTER DESIRES

I WEEP for lips whose brief
Red no kisses hath known,
And for longing left to moan
In a reaped, rich harvest of grief.

The rain must pour and pour!
Or the snow is thick on the sward,
While crouching wolves do ward
My threshold of dreams evermore,

And watch in my soul ever sighing,
With eyes in the past nigh dead,
All the blood that of old was shed
Of lambs on the hard ice dying.

Only the moon with its chill,
Monotonous sadness lights,
While autumn the thin grass blights,
My longing with hunger ill.

MAURICE MAETERLINCK
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

WINTER

By Sea and Shore

BY THE NORTH SEA

A LAND that is lonelier than ruin;
A sea that is stranger than death;
Far fields that a rose never blew in,
Wan waste where the winds lack breath;
Waste endless and boundless and flowerless
But of marsh-blossoms fruitless as free;
Where earth lies exhausted, as powerless
To strive with the sea.

Far flickers the flight of the swallows,
Far flutters the weft of the grass
Spun dense over desolate hollows
More pale than the clouds as they pass;
Thick woven as the weft of a witch is
Round the heart of a thrall that hath sinned,
Whose youth and the wrecks of its riches
Are waifs on the wind.

The pastures are herdless and sheepless,
No pasture or shelter for herds:
The wind is relentless and sleepless,
And restless and songless the birds;

Their cries from afar fall breathless,
Their wings are as lightnings that flee;
For the land has two lords that are deathless:
Death's self, and the sea.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

KYNANCE COVE
(From "Tristram of Lyonesse")

FOR here the flower of fire, the soft hoar bloom
Of springtide olive-woods, the warm green gloom
Of clouded seas that swell and sound with dawn of doom,
The keen thwart lightning and the wan grey light
Of stormy sunrise crossed and vexed with night,
Flash, loom, and laugh with divers hues in one
From all the curved cliff's face, till day be done,
Against the sea's face and the gazing sun.
And whensoever a strong wave, high in hope,
Sweeps up some smooth slant breadth of stone aslope,
That glowed with duskier fire of hues less bright,
Swift as it sweeps back springs to sudden sight
The splendour of the moist rock's fervent light,
Fresh as from dew of birth, when time was born
Out of the world-conceiving womb of morn.
All its quenched flames and darkling hues divine
Leap into lustrous life and laugh and shine
And darken into swift and dim decline
For one brief breath's space till the next wave run
Right up, and ripple down again, undone,
And leave it to be kissed and kindled of the sun.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

THE CAVES OF SARK

BUT the secrets inviolate of sunlight in hollows untrodden of day,
Shall he dream what are these who beholds not? or he that hath seen, shall he say?
For the path is for passage of sea-mews; and he that hath glided and leapt
Over sea-grass and sea-rock, alighting as one from a citadel crept
That his foemen beleaguer, descending by darkness and stealth, at the last
Peers under, and all is as hollow to hellward, agape and aghast.
But afloat and afar in the darkness a tremulous colour subsides
From the crimson high crest of the purple-peaked roof to the soft-coloured sides
That brighten as ever they widen till downward the level is won
Of the soundless and colourless water that knows not the sense of the sun:
From the crown of the culminant arch to the floor of the lakelet abloom,
One infinite blossom of blossoms innumerable aflush through the gloom.

All under the deeps of the darkness are glimmering; all
over impends
An immeasurable infinite flower of the dark that dilates
and descends,
That exults and expands in its breathless and blind
efflorescence of heart
As it broadens and bows to the wave-ward, and breathes
not, and hearkens apart.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

THE LANGUAGE OF NATURE'S FRAGRANCY

THESE are the "Coloured Caves" the sea-maid built;
Her walls are stained beyond that lonely fern,
For she must fly at every tide's return,
And all her sea-tints round the walls are spilt.
Outside behold the bay, each headland gilt
With morning's gold; far off the foam-wreaths burn
Like fiery snakes, while here the sweet waves yearn
On sand more soft than Avon's sacred silt.
And smell the sea! no breath of wood or field,
From lips of may or rose or eglantine,
Comes with the language of a breath benign,
Shuts the dark room where glimmers Fate revealed,
Calms the vext spirit, balms a sorrow unhealed,
Like scent of seaweed rich of morn and brine.

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

BREAKERS

O SUNBROWN days of island summer, full
Of cricket chirping and of sea-lament !
Still I can hear the sun-swept waves assaulting
The slope of silver olives from the sea :
Hissing of yellow manes racing to death,
Innumerable tears of God at play.
In crash and foam and royal march of billows
Image on image rolling into shape.
Onward they storm—attack of wild white chargers,
That raise their heads and melt in ambient light,
But rise again unburied and foam forwards,
To fetch me down into the sun-bright sea.

WILHELM WEIGAND
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

SEASCAPE

UNDER basaltic porticoes of calm sea-caves,
Heavy with alga and the moss of fucus gold,
In the occult, slow shaking of sea-waves,
Among the alga in proud blooms unfold
The cups of pride of silent, slender gladioles. . . .

The mystery wherein dies the rhythm of the waves
In gleams of kisses long and calm unrolls,
And the red coral whereon writhes the alga cold
Stretches out arms that bleed with calm flowers, and beholds
Its gleams reflected in the rest of waves.

Now here you stand in gardens flowered with alga, cold
In the nocturnal, distant song of waves,
Queen whose calm, pensive looks are glaucous gladioles,
Raising above the waves their light-filled bowls,
Among the alga on the coral where the ocean rolls.

ANDRÉ FONTAINAS
(*Translated by* JETHRO BITHELL)

THE SEA

IT keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from where it sometime fell,
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
Oh ye! who have your eyeballs vexed and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the sea;
Oh ye! whose ears are dimmed with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

JOHN KEATS

STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might:
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight—
The winds', the birds', the ocean-floods'—
The city's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore
Like light dissolved in star-showers thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone;
The lightning of the noon-tide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion—
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content, surpassing wealth,
The sage in meditation found,

And walk'd with inward glory crown'd—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure;
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne, and yet must bear,—
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

THE HAYSWATER BOAT

A REGION desolate and wild.
Black, chafing water: and afloat,
And lonely as a truant child
In a waste wood, a single boat:
No mast, no sails are set thereon;
It moves, but never moveth on:
And welters like a human thing
Amid the wild waves weltering.

Behind a buried vale doth sleep,
Far down the torrent cleaves its way:
In front the dumb rock rises steep,
A fretted wall of blue and grey;
Of shooting cliff and crumbled stone
With many a wild weed overgrown:
All else, black water: and afloat,
One rood from shore, that single boat.

Last night the wind was up and strong;
The grey-streak'd waters labour still:
The strong blast brought a pigmy throng
From that mild hollow in the hill;

By Sea and Shore

From those twin brooks, that beached strand
So featly strewn with drifted sand ;
From those weird domes of mounded green
That spot the solitary scene.

This boat they found against the shore :
The glossy rushes nodded by.
One rood from land they push'd, no more ;
Then rested, listening silently.
The loud rains lash'd the mountain's crown,
The grating shingle straggled down :
All night they sate ; then stole away,
And left it rocking in the bay.

Last night ?—I looked, the sky was clear,
The boat was old, a batter'd boat.
In sooth, it seems a hundred year
Since that strange crew did ride afloat,
The boat hath drifted in the bay—
The oars have moulder'd as they lay—
The rudder swings—yet none doth steer.
What living hand hath brought it here ?

MATTHEW ARNOLD

TO AILSA ROCK

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid!
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowl's screams!
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?
When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid?
How long is't since the mighty power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
Or when grey clouds are thy cold cover-lid?
Thou answer'st not, for thou art dead asleep!
Thy life is but two dead eternities—
The last in air, the former in the deep;
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies—
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size.

JOHN KEATS

FROM "A SUMMER NIGHT"

HEADLANDS stood out into the moonlit deep
As clearly as at noon;
The spring-tide's brimming flow
Heaved dazzlingly between;
Houses with long white sweep
Girdled the glistening bay;
Behind, through the soft air,
The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

DISTANT SOUND OF THE SEA AT EVENING

YET, rolling far up some green mountain-dale,
Oft let me hear, as ofttimes I have heard,
Thy swell, thou deep! when evening calls the bird
And bee to rest; when summer tints grow pale,
Seen through the gathering of a dewy veil;
And peasant-steps are hastening to repose,
And gleaming flocks lie down, and flower-cups close
To the last whisper of the falling gale.
Then, midst the dying of all other sound,
When the soul hears thy distant voice profound,
Lone-worshipping, and knows that through the night
'Twill worship still, then most its anthem-tone
Speaks to our being of the Eternal One,
Who girds tired nature with unslumbering light.

FELICIA D. HEMANS

ADDRESS TO THE OCEAN

OH! wonderful thou art, great element:
And fearful in thy spleeny humours bent,
And lovely in repose; thy summer form
Is beautiful, and when thy silver waves
Make music in earth's dark and winding caves,
I love to wander on thy pebbled beach,
Marking the sunlight at the evening hour,
And hearken to the thoughts thy waters teach—
Eternity—Eternity—and Power.

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

TO THE OCEAN

THOU glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests ; in all time,
Calm, or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving ; boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone
Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

LORD BYRON

FROM "THE SEA FAIRIES"

DAY and night to the billow the fountain calls:
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls
From wandering over the lea;
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
High over the full-toned sea.
Merrily carol the revelling gales
Over the islands free:
From the green sea-banks the rose down-trails
To the happy brimmèd sea.

LORD TENNYSON

THE SEA AT MIDNIGHT

IT is the midnight hour :—the beauteous sea,
Calm as the cloudless heaven, the heaven discloses,
While many a sparkling star, in quiet glee,
Far down within the watery sky reposes.
As if the Ocean's heart were stirr'd
With inward life, a sound is heard,
Like that of dreamer murmuring in his sleep ;
'Tis partly the billow, and partly the air,
That lies like a garment floating fair
Above the happy deep.

JOHN WILSON ("CHRISTOPHER NORTH")

WHEN DAYLIGHT DIES

HOW dear to me the hour when daylight dies,
And sunbeams melt along the silent sea ;
For then sweet dreams of other days arise,
And memory breathes her vesper sigh to thee.

And, as I watch the line of light, that plays
Along the smooth wave t'wards the burning west,
I long to tread that golden path of rays,
And think 'twould lead to some bright isle of rest.

THOMAS MOORE

A SUMMER NOON ON THE SHORE

A SANDY space
The ebbing tide has left upon its place;
Then just the hot and stony beach above,
Light twinkling streams in bright confusion move;
(For heated thus, the warmer air ascends,
And with the cooler in its fall contends.)
Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps
An equal motion; swelling as it sleeps,
Then slowly sinking; curling to the strand,
Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the ridgy sand,
Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
And back return in silence, smooth and slow.
Ships in the calm seem anchor'd; for they glide
On the still sea, urged solely by the tide.

GEORGE CRABBE

A SEA-SIDE WALK

WE walked beside the sea
After a day which perished silently
Of its own glory—like the princess weird
Who, combating the Genius, scorched and seared,
Uttered with burning breath, "Ho! victory!"
And sank adown a heap of ashes pale.
So runs the Arab tale.

The sky above us showed
A universal and unmoving cloud,
On which the cliffs permitted us to see
Only the outline of their majesty,
As master-minds when gazed at by the crowd!
And, shining with a gloom, the water grey
Swang in its moon-taught way.

Nor moon nor stars were out:
They did not dare to tread so soon about,
Though trembling, in the footsteps of the sun;
The light was neither night's nor day's, but one
Which, life-like, had a beauty in its doubt,
And Silence's impassioned breathings round
Seemed wandering into sound.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

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